

WHITE-KNUCKLED INTEGRITY

By Roy Goodlet

On a commuter flight from Portland, Maine to Boston in 1987, the pilot heard an unusual noise near the rear of the small aircraft. Henry Dempsey turned the controls over to his co-pilot and went back to check it out. As he reached the tail section, the plane hit an air pocket, and Dempsey was tossed against the rear door. He quickly discovered the source of the mysterious noise. The rear door had not been properly latched prior to take-off, and it flew open. Dempsey was instantly sucked out of the jet. The co-pilot, seeing the red light that indicated an open door, radioed the nearest airport requesting an emergency landing. He reported that the pilot had fallen out of the plane and requested a helicopter search of that area of the ocean. After the plane had landed the ground crew found Henry Dempsey holding onto the outdoor ladder of the aircraft. Somehow, he had caught the ladder, held on for ten minutes as the plane flew 200 miles per hour at an altitude of 4,000 feet and then, at landing, kept his head from hitting the runway, which was a mere twelve inches away. According to news reports, it took several airport personnel more than a few minutes to pry Dempsey's fingers free from the ladder.

Are there values in our lives that we believe are worth holding onto with such white-knuckled intensity? There should be. I read, "Integrity involves two issues: a study of what is the right thing to do, and consideration of what price you are willing to pay to do the right thing." I once asked a group of adults what promises they believed were worth keeping. #4 - Any promise made to a child. #3 - To live for Christ. #2 - Marriage vows. #1 - All promises. I praise the Lord that we can recognize what a good promise is, but the question is, are we going to keep them?

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9 that there are four benefits of keeping a promise: #1 - If you want to harvest you must first plant. The more seed you plant the more you can harvest. (Vs. 6). #2 - God will provide for your needs and you will never be penalized for your faithfulness. (Vs. 8-11). #3 - The needs of others will be met. (Vs. 12a). #4 - People will turn to God and praise him. (Vs. 12-13).

Who is there at work or in our neighborhoods that needs to see the positive side of being a Christian? Who at school needs to see that Christian teens are not hypocrites? Chuck Swindoll said that a hypocrite is someone who feels repentant on Sunday for something he did on Saturday and intends to do again on Monday. If you call yourself a Christian, then let people see you as being one. We are meant to be promise keepers who have promised to be a Christian 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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